

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 PM-07 ACDA-19 AEC-11

CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 OMB-01

SCI-06 DRC-01 /210 W

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R 251045Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1669

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USUN NEW YORK 1646

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL HONGKONG

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6919

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, PARM, IN.

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SUBJ: INDIA'S NUCLEAR TEST; THE FIRST WEEK

REF: CALCUTTA 973 AND MADRAS 640 NOTAL

1. THE REACTION HERE THIS LAST WEEK WAS ONE OF EUPHORIA AND SELF CONGRATULATION. INDIA HAS BROKEN THE BIG-FIVE MONOPLY. INDIANS SAY: NOW WE WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND COMMAND RESPECT; INDIA CAN NO LONGER BE IGNORED; NOR CAN IT BE BULLIED. A DISCOURAGED COUNTRY--OR THAT RELATIVELY SMALL SEGMENT CONSCIOUS OF THE TEST--HAS RESPONDED WITH A WAVE OF PERSONAL AND NATIONAL PRIDE.

2. MRS. GANDHI HAS BEEN GIVEN A BOOST WHEN SHE BADLY NEEDED IT. THE FOCUS IS ON HER ACHIEVEMENT AND NOT--AS IN RECENT MONTHS--ON HER PROBLEMS.

3. UNDERLYING THE EUPHORIA THERE IS A DOUBLE THREAT OF DOUBT:
--CONCERN OVER THE NATION'S PERIORITIES. AS REDDY SAID IN THE HINDU: "THE NUCLEAR MANTLE AND AN EMPTY STOMACH DO NOT GO WELL IN PROJECTING INDIA'S IMAGE."
--CONCERN OVER THE REACTION OF OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY IN THE WEST, AND OVER THE EFFECT OF THE TEST ON INDIA'S AID PROSPECTS.

4. US REACTION HAS RECEIVED SPECIALLY CLOSE SCRUTINY. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS REPORTED EXTENSIVELY AND THE NEW YORK TIMES HIT A RAW INDIAN NERVE. WHILE THE LEFT AND PRO-SOVIET PRESS PLAYED UP US HOSTILITY, MOST COMMENTATORS FOUND THE OFFICIAL US REACTION MODERATE. SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS TOUCHED OFF A ONE-DAY FLURRY ON HOW THE COULD WITHDRAW NON-EXISTENT PROTECTION.

5. CHINESE AND SOVIET COMMENT WAS REPORTED BRIEFLY WITH THE LEFT PRESS PLAYING UP SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF INDIA'S PEACEFUL PROTESTATIONS. CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE FRENCH AEC CHAIRMAN WERE WARMLY RECEIVED. THE STRONG CANADIAN RESPONSE WAS TAKEN MORE IN SORROW THAN ANGER WITH THE HOPE THAT OTTAWA WOULD SOON SEE THE LIGHT (NEW DELHI 6901). THERE WAS WARY COMMENT ON WHAT THE JAPANESE AND WEST GERMANS MIGHT DO, REPORT OF WORLD BANK CONCERN ABOUT THE CONSORTIUM MEETING, AND SPECULATION THAT THE TEST WOULD DELAY OR KILL REPLENISHMENT OF IDA FUNDS.

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6. PAKISTAN WAS PORTRAYED AS REACTIONG NASTILY AND UNREASONABLY, BUT, AS SOME NOTED FROM THE CENTO COMMUNIQUE, PERHAPS WITHOUT GREAT EFFECT. AFTER AZIZ AHMED'S CALL ON PRESIDENT NIXON, HEADLINES ANNOUNCED "NO CHANGE IN US ARMS SUPPLY POLICY. INDIAN ASSURANCES ABOUT SIMLA AND PEACEFUL INTENTIONS WERE HIGHLIGHTED HERE.

7. PRIVATELY, SOME OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGE THE TEST WAS NOT

PROMPTED BY EXPECTATION OF ECONOMIC APPLICATIONS. BUT THE PRESS HAS NOT OPENLY CHALLENGED THE FLOW OF GOVERNMENT RELEASES ON PEACEFUL USES. INDIAN AEC SOURCES HINTED BROADLY THIS WAS BUT THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF "PEACEFUL" EXPERIMENTS. SOME ANALYSTS HAVE SPECULATED ABOUT SCENARIOS FOR MILITARY APPLICATIONS, RIGHT-WINGERS AND CHAUVINISTS HAVE CALLED FOR FAST WORK IN THIS DIRECTION, AND A FEW THOUGHTFUL WRITERS HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT MODERATES WILL BE UNDERCUT IF OTHER COUNTRIES NOW TRY TO BULLY INDIA. THE SOVIET SUPPORTED COMMUNIST PARTY WELCOMED THE TEST IN SMALL PRINT, BUT URGED THAT NO QUARTER BE GIVEN TO NOISY CHAMPIONS OF AN INDIAN NUCLEAR DETERRENT.

8. A SUBSTANTIAL CROSS-SECTION OF COLONELS AND GROUP CAPTAINS AT THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE TOLD A BRITISH OFFICER ATTENDING THE COURSE THAT THEY WERE SURE THE GOIK WOULD MOVE TO A WEAPONS CAPABILITY REGARDLESS OF WHAT IT SAID. CIVILIANS AT THE COURSE DISAGREED AND ACCEPTED THE GOVERNMENT'S PROTESTATIONS. THE JOINT SECRETARY HANDLING UN AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TOLD THE BRITISH MINISTER THAT INDIA NOW COULD HARDLY EXPRESS DIS-APPROVAL OF ANY OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH WENT THE NUCLEAR TEST ROUTE.

9. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN BUSY WITH RELEASES, PUBLICITY, AND BACKGROUNDERS PLAYING UP INDIA'S ACHIEVEMENT, AFFIRMING ITS PEACEFUL INTENTIONS, AND PUTTING THE MOST POSITIVE GLOSS ON FOREIGN REACTION. IT HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN DELHI AND ABROAD IN EXPLAINING INDIA'S POSITION TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS. FOR THE PRESENT, INDIA SHOWS SIGNS OF CONSIDERABLE SATISFACTION.
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